

Strategic Planning and Service Area Questions Summer 2005 -- <http://dpb.virginia.gov/SP/index.htm>

Can I alter or delete my service area titles?

No, you should not alter or delete any of your service area titles from the database. They have been developed by your agency and DPB to best represent what your agency does. Additionally, the titles and corresponding coding are used to appropriate dollars to your agency as well as drive the accounting system. Please direct further questions to your DPB analyst.

Appendix A of the Agency Strategic Plan requires that Agency IT Investment plans be entered into the VITA CATSPA Application. Is this information also submitted with the Agency Plan or will DPB download reports from CATSPA?

At this point, the CATSPA (Commonwealth Agency Technology Strategic Planning Application) submission is completely separate; it is not to be submitted with the agency plan in July 2005. The database does not ask you to enter your CATSPA information. When your plan is issued in future versions, the CATSPA should be included, though, in your Appendix A.

However, the "Info Tech" section of the strategic plan database still needs to be filled out by your agency. The information for this section should be a high level summary of what you include in your CATSPA submission. As well, the financial information requested should also be summary in nature.

Please refer to page 16 of the [database instructions](#), page 30 of the [agency planning handbook](#), and the [VITA CATSPA](#) for more information on the CATSPA submission.

When I open the database, I get an error message that says the file format is unrecognizable. What do I need to do to fix this?

Though there may be several causes, the problem is most likely related to your version of Microsoft Access. Please contact your DPB analyst if this problem occurs.

Certain sections of the database appear to be inactive or cannot be accessed when I try to enter information. What do I need to do to fix this?

Though there may be several causes, the problem is most likely related to your version of Microsoft Access. Please contact your DPB analyst if this problem occurs.

When I print my strategic plans and service area reports, some of the text appears to be shortened or “truncated”. Has my information been lost?

Most likely, no. An easily fixed error has been identified in the report feature of the database. This error shortens the text of some of the fields of the report. Please contact your DPB analyst if this problem occurs.

When I try to print my service area reports Access says it is “Formatting Page”, but never produces the report. Access appears to be locked up.

A fix has been identified in the report formatting that will fix this problem. If it occurs, make note of the service area that Access is struggling with and contact your DPB analyst.

Are non-state agencies required to submit strategic and service area plans?

There are a few cases where non-state organizations are appropriated dollars in the same manner as state agencies in the Appropriation Act (e.g., Institute for Advanced Learning and Research). The annual appropriations these organizations receive from the Commonwealth supplement their operations, providing crucial support to their missions, but do not reflect the entire scope of their activities. Furthermore, these organizations are not agents of Virginia. Such organizations are required to submit strategic and service area plans only for the services supported in whole or in part by state appropriations.

In cases where non-state agencies receive appropriations through Item 531, Chapter 951, 2005 Acts of Assembly, the organizations must make submissions as required by the Code of Virginia. They are not required to participate in the Strategic and Service Area planning effort.

If you need guidance or have any questions about the status of your agency, please contact your DPB analyst for more information.

Do I need to create objectives and performance measures for Administrative and Support Services?

Yes. At either the Program or Service Area levels, agencies are expected to develop objectives. Administrative functions are a little more difficult to define because in most cases they don't directly reflect your agency's mission and what you do. However, management and efficiency objectives are independent and in many cases, significant portions of your budget are allocated to these efforts.

In developing objectives and measures for administrative and support services that aren't mission critical, try first to determine what sort of information would help management in making decisions about the success of these efforts. For example, are employee turnover rates important? Are SWAM (Small, Women, and Minority Business Certification) indicators relevant? Are IT needs and expenses understood? Are there management standards to measure productivity and performance?

The central question should be "How do I know if a specific administrative or support service is performing well?" The answer to the question should help you set objectives and performance measures for administrative and support services.

We are having difficulty distinguishing who our customers are. We could say "all Citizens of the Commonwealth," "all Taxpayers of the Commonwealth" or "all that use our services". Though these may be true, they really do not define who our customers are. What is the best approach to take in defining them?

First, it is best to understand what a customer is. "Customer" is a blanket term used to define someone or something that your agency interacts with. This broad use of customer may include citizens and other individuals that are affected by or utilize a product you provide, vendors or contractors who serve you, and organizations that your agency provides services to. A customer may also be thought of in terms of a client, population served, or individual served.

Second, it is better to be specific in defining your customers. At some level, every state agency could say name all Citizens of the Commonwealth as their customer. However, a precise description may read "Adoptable Children", "Veterans", "District Courts", or "Commercial Motor Carriers."

The Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy identifies many different customers and populations served in its sample strategic plan. They range from mineral extraction workers, to the public affected by their operations, from related mineral extraction businesses, to other governmental organizations.

Using prisons and the correctional system as an example, it has been pointed out that the citizens of the Commonwealth are all customers. At the same time, given the broad definition, an inmate or other participant in the correctional system may also be considered a customer. Thinking in these terms, categorizing a prisoner as a "customer" may not make sense. However, the intent of defining a customer is to help show what your resources are dedicated to. In this sense, an inmate should be considered a customer.

We don't really agree that the vision statement shouldn't be time bound. The mission statement is but, an agency's vision may change based on resources and priority changes.

Though we agree that an agency's vision may change based on resources and priority changes, to place a time limit at this level may, in fact, restrict an agency ability to reach that vision.

Resource and priority changes can occur quickly and unexpected. For that reason, placing a time limit at that level may hold your agency to attaining a vision that you cannot because of the changes in priority.

The time element should manifest itself in your service area objectives and measures. If there is a resource or priority change, missed performance can be explained at that level.

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Commonwealth Agency Technology Strategic Planning Application (CATSPA)

CATSPA

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